



Department of Energy

Bonneville Power Administration
P.O. Box 3621
Portland, Oregon 97208-3621

November 20, 2001

To: People Interested in the Northeast Oregon Hatchery - Grande Ronde and Imnaha Spring Chinook Project

Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) is working with several partners on a project that may affect or interest you—the Northeast Oregon Hatchery - Grande Ronde and Imnaha Spring Chinook Project. This letter briefly explains what we are proposing, and announces a change in the environmental process for this project, and upcoming public meetings.

Proposal

This project is a joint effort of the Nez Perce Tribe (NPT), the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR), the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), and BPA.

This project proposes to modify the existing Lookingglass Fish Hatchery and Imnaha satellite facility and build new facilities on the Lostine and Imnaha Rivers. A new incubation, rearing, and trapping facility is proposed for the Lostine River, a Grande Ronde Basin tributary, and a new rearing facility is proposed for the Imnaha River. In addition, modifications are proposed to the Lookingglass Fish Hatchery on the Grande Ronde River and the Imnaha satellite facility on the Imnaha River. (See enclosed map.) This project does not involve program issues or increases in the number of fish to be produced, but rather new and upgraded facilities that support an existing approved program and level of fish production.

The existing facilities and production programs are part of the ongoing USFWS's Lower Snake River Compensation Plan and the Northwest Power Planning Council's Fish and Wildlife Program. These additional facilities would help these ongoing programs meet their conservation, compensation, and recovery goals for spring chinook salmon. Spring chinook salmon are listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act.

Environmental Analysis

As a Federal agency, BPA must study the environmental impacts, both adverse and beneficial, of a proposed project before it can proceed. Based on similar site-specific projects, an initial decision was made to initiate an Environmental Assessment (EA). BPA initiated scoping of issues for the EA in November 2000. However, the Imnaha portion of this project is located within the boundaries of the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area and the Imnaha Wild and Scenic River. Modifications to the existing Imnaha satellite facility and any new Imnaha facilities may involve construction in the Imnaha River, which could create significant impacts. Therefore, it has been determined that the appropriate level of environmental coverage is an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The USFWS and the USFS will be cooperating agencies for the EIS.

BPA is reinitiating the scoping process, and would like your help defining issues for the EIS.

To Comment

BPA and the project's fishery managers will provide detailed information about the proposed facilities and modifications to existing facilities at three public meetings. Written information will also be available, and BPA and USFS staff will answer questions and accept oral and written comments.

Public Meetings

We have scheduled three meetings to hear your ideas. There will be a short presentation at the beginning of the meeting, with staff available to answer questions and take comments after the presentation.

January 15, 2002, 7:00 p.m.

Imnaha Christian Fellowship Church
78782 Imnaha Highway, Imnaha, Oregon

January 16, 2002, 7:00 p.m.

South Fork Grange
181 Highway 82, Lostine, Oregon

January 17, 2002, 7:00 p.m.

Eastern Oregon University, Hoke Hall
1 University Boulevard (intersection of 7th Street and I Avenue)
LaGrande, Oregon

Any ideas you want to share would be appreciated. As you may know, Tribal and ODFW staff have had some local meetings in the past that have been very valuable. Please let us know if you would like to have a meeting in your area.

BPA invites comments and suggestions on the proposed scope of the Draft EIS. Send comment letters and requests to be placed on the project mailing list to Communications, Bonneville Power Administration - KC-7, P.O. Box 12999, Portland, Oregon, 97212. The phone number of the Communications Office is 503-230-3478 in Portland; toll-free 1-800-622-4519 outside of Portland. Comments may also be sent to the BPA Internet address: comment@bpa.gov, or faxed to 503-230-3285. **Please comment by January 31, 2002.** Please reference the Grande Ronde and Imnaha Spring Chinook Project in all communications.

Project Schedule

We plan to have an EIS ready for public review in the Fall of 2002. If you would like to receive a copy when it is available, please return the enclosed postcard and check the appropriate box. If you don't return the postcard, we will still send you notice when the study is available for public review.

For More Information

In the meantime, if you have questions, call me toll-free at 1-800-282-3713 or at my direct number 503-230-7349, or send me an e-mail at prsmith@bpa.gov. You can also call Becky Ashe, Project Leader for the Nez Perce Tribe, at 208-843-7320, ext. 2433. Her e-mail address is beckya@nezperce.org. Also, you may want to check our web site for project information at <http://www.efw.bpa.gov/cgi-bin/PSA/NEPA/SUMMARIES/Granderonde>.

Thank you for your interest.

Sincerely,

/s/ Nancy H. Weintraub *for*

Patricia R. Smith
Environmental Project Lead

Enclosures:
Map
Postcard

Grande Ronde and Imnaha Spring Chinook Project

- ▲ Modify Existing Facilities
- ◆ Potential Site - Incubation and / or Rearing Facilities

State, Federal, Tribal, County, City Lands

Private or Other

Major Road

Interstate

Subbasin Boundary

BASIN LOCATION



October 22, 2001

